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CO-OWNER OF MAHADEV APP UNDER HOUSE DETENTION IN DUBAI

Sourabh Chandrakar, one of the promoters of the scam-tainted Mahadev online betting app, has been put under house detention in Dubai. Indian probe agencies have been alerted about Chandrakar's detention and they are working through diplomatic channels to get him and another promoter Ravi Uppal deported. Uppal, was detained in Dubai last week. The ED had alleged that the app's promoters paid about ₹508 crore to the then Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Bhagel

RAHUL YATRA 2.0 FROM JANUARY 14

Travel from Manipur to Mumbai largely by bus with short stretches of walking in between

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

HOPING to rejuvenate the Congress in the Hindi heartland states where the party faced a humiliating defeat in the recent polls, senior leader Rahul Gandhi will launch the second edition of his Bharat Jodo Yatra from January 14 to March 20. Called the Bharat Nyay Yatra, it will begin in Manipur and culminate in Mumbai.

The two-month long yatra will be flagged off by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge from Imphal. The East to West yatra will be mostly by bus with short stretches of walking, and will cover 6,200 km across 14 states.

Announcing the schedule on Wednesday, Congress general secretary in-charge of organisation KC Venugopal said the yatra aims to secure economic, social and political justice for the people. "The name reflects the objective of the yatra. Everyone should get justice. This yatra will interact with youth, women and the marginalised in the country," he said.

In the first edition that was launched on September 7 last year, Rahul walked over 4,500 km from Kanyakumari to Kashmir covering 12 states and two Union Territories (UTs). The walkathon concluded on January 30 in Srinagar.

Venugopal said that the Congress Working Committee on December 21 unanimously decided that Rahul should commence the second edition of the yatra from East to West.

On choosing Manipur as the starting point of the yatra, Venugopal said, "Without Manipur how can we do a yatra? We want to heal the wounds of Manipur. This yatra is for love and affection." While analysts view the yatra as another image building exercise of Rahul ahead of elections, Venugopal refused to attach any political overtones to it. "It will not be a political yatra. The party wants to raise issues affecting the common people."

Replying to a question on whether Opposition parties in the I.N.D.I.A bloc would participate in the yatra, Venugopal said the final details were being worked out.

14 STATES, 6,200 KM

The 6,200 km East to West yatra will cover 14 states — Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. It's full itinerary will be announced later

KRV rally turns ugly, shops vandalised, 1K detained

MOHAMMED YACOOB @ Bengaluru

DEMANDING that shops and commercial establishments display Kannada name boards prominently, activists of Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) went on a rampage across Bengaluru on Wednesday, damaging and blackening non-Kannada boards.

Police had a tough time in bringing the situation under control in many areas of the city. Around 1,000 activists were taken into preventive custody. Traffic on the busy airport road was disrupted for some time.

The activists of KRV (TA Narayana Gowda faction) took out a rally and resorted to vandalism. They smashed display panels and painted the non-Kannada name boards black.

Chaos prevailed on Lavelle Road, MG Road, Brigade Road, UB City and surrounding areas. Incidents of stone-throwing were also reported in many places. Shop owners downed shutters fearing damage to property.

The Kannada outfit, which had launched a campaign across the city and set a deadline to display Kannada boards by Wednesday, took out an awareness rally from Sadahalli Gate near Kempegowda International Airport to Cubbon Park. The activists, who got wind of the police plan to stop their rally midway, split into groups and went on the rampage. P2

Kannada Rakshana Vedike members take out a rally on KIA Road in Bengaluru demanding commercial establishments use Kannada on name boards, on Wednesday

EXPRESS READ

Gas leak in Chennai fertiliser unit; 57 in hosp

Chennai: In a double whammy to the residents of Ennore who are still struggling with the ill-effects of the recent oil spill from Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL), 57 people were hospitalised on Wednesday after ammonia gas leaked from a fertiliser manufacturer company in the area. Hospital sources said all those being treated, including those in ICU, are stable | P5

FIR against MP Simha for remarks on Siddu

Mysuru: Devaraja police registered an FIR against Mysuru-Kodagu MP Pratap Simha on Tuesday night following a complaint by the Mysuru District Congress Committee for his remarks against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah | P4

Eye on polls, Centre hikes copra MSP

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday approved a hike of ₹250-300 per quintal in the minimum support price (MSP) for copra , raising it to ₹11,160-12,000 per quintal for for the 2024 season. The decision apparently is aimed at wooing farmers of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which produce both milling and ball copra, ahead of the 2024 elections.

The decision along with others including construction of a new six-lane bridge across river Ganga between Patna and Saran in Bihar was taken at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Union minister Anurag Thakur said though copra prices have fallen globally, the government has decided to increase the MSP by 50% more than the production cost.

Milling copra is to used extract oil while ball copra is consumed as a dry fruit and used on a large scale for religious rituals across India, including in the South. The ball copra is cultivated in Karnataka, where the BJP is trying to win maximum seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls by wooing the farmers of the state. This season, the government procured a record 1.33 lakh tonnes of copra, at a cost of ₹1,493 crore, benefiting around 90,000 farmers.

Among the other decisions, the Cabinet also approved the construction of a new 4.56 km long bridge across the Ganga between Patna and Saran in Bihar. The six-lane bridge on the Ganga will be built at a cost of ₹3,064.45 crore.

The Cabinet also granted ex-post facto approval to sign and ratify a Migration and Mobility Agreement with Italy that allows Indian students temporary residence in the European nation for up to one year after studies to gather professional experience.

Besides, the Cabinet discussion an agreement inked by Prasar Bharati with the Malaysian public broadcaster.

The MSP for milling copra for 2024 will be higher than that of 2023. It has been increased by Rs 300 per quintal. The MSP for ball copra has been increased by Rs 250 per quintal. This cabinet decision comes as a relief to farmers. I thank the Prime Minister. @PMOIndia
— HD Deve Gowda, JDS supremo and former PM

WRESTLING

IOA sets up ad-hoc panel, WFI cries foul

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE wrestling saga witnessed a fresh twist on Wednesday. On a day when Congress leader Rahul Gandhi went to grapple with protesting wrestler Bajrang Punia, the Indian Olympic Association formed an ad hoc committee to run the Wrestling Federation of India.

The three-member panel will be headed by Bhupinder Singh Bajwa, former Wushu Association of India president. Hockey Olympian M M Somaya and former international badminton player Manjusha Kanwar are the other members. Newly-elected WFI president Sanjay Singh cried foul and said the formation of the ad-hoc panel is unconstitutional. "I am an elected member and not a nominated one and the sports ministry cannot suspend it because it is an autonomous body," he said. Though the sports ministry had 'suspended' the WFI three days after elections, the IOA formally suspended the wrestling body on Wednesday and put the reins in the hands of the ad-hoc committee.

The IOA said due to the lack of good governance they were forced to appoint the ad-hoc body. All eyes will be on the United World Wrestling that had suspended the WFI for not conducting elections in August. The UWW has not said anything about the elections. P15

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